

# SYNOPSIS

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## "THE CALL OF HIS PEOPLE"

Nelson Holmes, having advanced from office boy to the position of Manager of Domestic Sales of the Brazilian-American Coffee Syndicate through his own efforts, finds himself called into the presence of the company's directors where Lionel Weathering, the president, informs him of his advancement to the position of General Manager of the syndicate's interests, and at the same time entrusts him with the task of enforcing the company's contracts with the Santos Company. These contracts, made three years previous, if enforced, will spell ruin to the Santos Company - which has proven itself the syndicate's only rival in the control of the American coffee trade. Beauregard Stuart, Manager of Foreign Sales and a brother-in-law of Paul Andrews, one of the syndicate's most influential directors, has long had his cap set for the position given Holmes and receives the news of Holmes' advancement with no end of vexation, especially so, when he catches sight of the combination of the company's safe, entrusted to Holmes by Weathering, and never before shared by anyone except the president.

Having attained the great position of General Manager, Holmes finds himself facing a new fear - lest they discover his past. A past he has safely concealed for twenty years. If the truth should leak out it would mean his ruination, and he vows to guard that secreted past with renewed caution.

In the days which follow his advancement he is visited by a representative of the Santos Company who pleads with him not to enforce the contracts existing with his concern, but Holmes, harboring secret ambitions to rise still further, refuses to listen to the man's vain pleas and voices his determination to go through with the matter. Weathering, hearing of this, promises Holmes an interest in the syndicate should he put the deal through successfully.

Reveling in the thought of the big things in store for himself, Holmes, is visited by a young colored man, James Graves, seeking a position as a Spanish correspondent. The two recognize each other as boyhood playmates much to the discomfiture of Holmes. Graves recalls their youthful days and the little love affair between his sister, Elinor, and Holmes, who, upon leaving the south, had faithfully vowed to return to her when he had made good. Holmes, fearing Graves for the latter's knowledge regarding himself, offers him a position but attempts to induce Graves to deny his people and pose as a Spaniard. This Graves refuses to do. Holmes, greatly in fear that his past may be revealed should he refuse this boyhood chum a position, offers Graves his private secretaryship - provided he promises to forget, once and for all time, Holmes' past. This Graves agrees to do, but at the same time, inwardly loathing Holmes for his mockery.

Graves, upon his return home, tells Elinor about Holmes. Elinor refuses to believe her brother's assertion that her sweetheart of childhood days had disowned his people in hour of success.

Holmes, deeply affected by Graves' reminiscences of bygone days, finds himself unable to resist the temptation of seeing Elinor and calls upon her. Here Elinor is confronted by the grim truth of her brother's words. Holmes, vainly striving to vindicate himself in her eyes, relates his earlier struggles and disappointments until Fate finally cast the die which moulded his future. She remonstrates with him that it is not too late to acquaint the world with the truth. He evades her suggestion and she dismisses him with her decision that when he will return as one of her people - then, and not before then, will she resume the friendship welded in youth.

Holmes, later, rescues Elinor from the clutches of an annoyance but she

merely thanks him for his kind deed and again he suffers the agony of seeing her coolly pass out of his presence.

The Santos Company, facing financial ruin at the hands of the Brazilian-American Coffee Syndicate and its determined General Manager, decides upon a daring move to save their own skins. A representative, again calling upon Holmes, finds him still determined to carry out his plans and offers him a big bribe to destroy the contracts. Holmes, in a rage, orders the man from his office just as Graves enters and overhears part of the conversation. Stuart, in the adjoining office, has overheard the entire conversation. Desperate for money he waits for the representative and makes an appointment with him for that evening.

That evening, Graves, leaving an uptown cigar store, catches sight of Stuart and the representative of the Santos Company leaving the restaurant adjoining the cigar store. Overhearing Stuart tell the representative that he will secure the contracts for him that night, and remembering the incident that had occurred earlier that day, Graves sets out to trail Stuart whom he follows to the offices of the syndicate. Unable to effect an entrance by way of the front door, due to him not having a key, Graves makes his way up by means of the fire escape. Coming upon Stuart at the open safe he attacks him without revealing his identity and succeeds in securing the contracts after a fierce struggle in the semi-dark office. Hardly had he succeeded in making his escape when Holmes, returning to the office on an important mission, comes upon Stuart, still partly dazed from the struggle. Stuart, mistaking Holmes as the man who had attacked him and seeing a chance to hastily cover his own tracks, accuses him of the theft.

Graves, having sprained his ankle in making his escape, returns home and tells Elinor what has taken place. Giving her the contracts he informs her of their importance to Holmes' future success. Elinor, taking the contracts, wages a struggle with herself whether to return them and insist Holmes that success which he craves or to destroy them and force him to turn back to his people.

The following morning, Stuart, in the presence of Weathering, accuses Holmes of the theft. At the height of the accusation, Elinor enters with the contracts and a letter from her brother, placing the guilt of the theft upon Stuart.

After Elinor's departure, Holmes, deeply effected by Graves' loyalty, makes a confession of the past to Weathering who assures him that it is the man and not the color that counts.

Brought to his senses by the deeds of Elinor and her brother, Holmes seeks Elinor and asks her humble forgiveness and for her hand in marriage - now proud to be one of her people.



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